

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Stevenson, Kirsten](#)
Subject: Regarding the HPS budget increase
Date: Thursday, February 8, 2024 5:06:37 PM

To the Hamilton Police Board,

I am writing to strongly oppose the proposed \$16 million increase in the Hamilton Police Services (HPS) budget for the fiscal year 2024. As a resident of Hamilton in Ward 2, I strongly believe that our city must urgently reassess its priorities and investments, particularly in terms of public safety, public health, and community well-being. It has become increasingly apparent that our current allocation of resources, which heavily favours law enforcement, fails to adequately address the diverse needs of our community. I am asking you not only to re-examine this budget, but to reject all increases to the HPS budget.

During the January 16th, 2024 General Issues Committee meeting of Hamilton city council, constituents expressed significant opposition to this proposed increase in the HPS budget. On January 18th, 2024, CBC Hamilton published an article citing a study by the University of Toronto that found "no consistent associations" between crime rates and increasing police budgets.

On April 12th, 2023, the Hamilton City Council unanimously declared a state of emergency over the opioid crisis, homelessness, and mental health. These issues are not isolated; they stem from health inequity within our community. They arise when the social determinants of health, including food insecurity, income distribution, health services, disability, housing, race, education, and employment, are not adequately addressed.

I struggle to see how increasing the HPS budget directly and robustly improves any of these factors. However, I can see a direct correlation between increased funding for housing support, public health, social services, childcare, education, libraries, and public transportation, and the strengthening of these determinants.

For decades, our social safety net has been under immense pressure, resulting in funding cuts and increased demand. The erosion of the social safety net and cuts to health and social services have led to police responding to mental health or substance use crises, despite the fact that the policing model was not designed to address these issues effectively.

This presents an opportunity for our city to envision new possibilities and adequately address the needs of our community. The status quo of continuing to increase the HPS budget is not working and has not worked thus far to create a healthier and safer community. I urge you to fully reject the proposed increase in the Hamilton Police Services budget and instead support reinvesting in initiatives that enhance the well-being of all residents and actively work to mitigate health inequity.

As a community, we have a shared responsibility to care for one another. HPS must embrace the principle of resource sharing, allowing to redistribute funds in a manner that reflects the priorities and values of the entire community.

Hollie Pocsai she/her
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